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## Assessing the Perceptions of Local Residents on the Positive and Negative Impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan 2016

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### Abstract:

Jordan is the first Middle Eastern and Arab country to host a FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to explore residents' perceptions on impacts of this event and it further explores if there is a potential difference between males and females in their perceptions on the impacts of this event. The results of this study showed that 'tourism resource development and urban revitalization' was the main residents' perception on the positive impacts of the event, whereas 'negative economic perspective' such as increased price of real estate was the main locals' perception on the negative impacts. Furthermore, results indicated that variations in respondents' perceptions commonly could be explained by their gender differences as male respondents indicated that they more highly perceived both positive and negative impacts of this event than local female respondents did.

**Keywords:** mega event; sport tourism; World Cup; FIFA; impacts; local community

**JEL Classification:** L83; Z32.

### Introduction

It is believed that the major motives for governments to invest in sport are mostly based on domestic and diplomatic motives (Horne *et al.* 2013). More specifically, the main domestic motives are urban regeneration, nation building, and social integration, whereas diplomatic motives involve showing support for the actions of other states, image building and the building of tentative diplomatic connections (Houlihan and Zhenq 2015). Overall, sport events are considered in both the developing and developed countries as component of a wider tourism plan concentrating on improving the cities and countries as a whole (Kotze and Visser 2008). Thus, it is obvious that sport events play a vital role in promoting tourism in a host destination (Chen and Funk 2010).

In the context of this study, Jordan has hosted the first female World Cup in the Middle East. This Sporting event represents a significant opportunity to confront the repercussions of the Arab Spring and its consequences on the tourism industry in Jordan. However, The Arab Spring, which erupted in late 2010, has had a great impact on the tourism industry in the entire Arab region (Mansfeld and Winckler 2015). It is worth mentioning that tourism industry has played major role in enhancing the economy of Jordan and it represents the second fastest growing sector being the largest export sector and a main source of employment (Allan 2013). However, one of the main challenges for cities or nations hosting mega sport events is to find new ways to improve their performance in economic, social, and the environmental terms (Preuss 2013). The potential cost of renovation and upgrading the sport facilities in Jordan in order to meet FIFA requirements to host this event was US\$49.3 Million (Association International de La Press Sportive (AIPS) 2016). Consequently, according to the local organizing Committee, this U17 World Cup can revamp the infrastructure in Jordan and help the country to host more international and regional

sporting events in the future (AIPS 2016). Also, sporting event provides host communities a worldwide platform to show and promote their national identities and cultures (Dolles and Sodennan 2008; Grix 2013).

FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup is an international Soccer competition tournament for female players under 17 years old. The first tournament was held in 2008 in New Zealand and it is organized by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) every four years (FIFA 2016). Overall, the tournament attracted about (1000, 14) spectators since 2008 to 2016 (Table 1).

Table 1. Host countries and number of attendances 2008-2016 in FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, adapted from (FIFA 2016)

Host countries	Year	Total Teams	Total matches	Total spectators	Ave. per match
New Zealand	2008	16	32	207,803	6,494
Trinidad & Tobago	2010	16	32	146,156	4,567
Azerbaijan	2012	16	32	257,766	8,055
Costa Rica	2014	16	32	284,320	8,885
Jordan	2016	16	32	104,095	3,253
Total		80	160	1000,14	6,251

Having the above in mind, it is rare to host international female sport event in an Arabic country, particularly a Soccer World Cup. Thus, Jordan had hosted the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2016 to boost its economy and enhance its touristic image. Additionally, the tournament has played significant role in promoting the sport activities for girls and women in the Arab World. According to the Asian Football Development Program (2013), "the tournament will help kick off a positive wave for women's football in the region, particularly in grassroots football development". As a result, exploring the perceptions of local residents in Jordan on the impacts of such event is still undeveloped area of study. In addition, no research has been found that surveyed the perception of local residents in the Arab countries toward international sport events. It is thus the purpose of this study to determine local residents' perceptions on the positive and negative impacts of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan.

## 1. Literature Review

Overall, tourism and sport represent the largest and fastest growing sectors on the global context, both in the social and economic aspects (Kurtzman and Zauhar 2003). Hosting different events is a direct and substantial motivator of tourism and has become a prominent component of tourism plans in several destinations (Getz 2008). Most of mega sporting events generated positive economic impact to the hosting communities (Preuss 2004). Accordingly, large scale sport tourism events could attract a broad range of local and international attendants. Such events are usually considered as potential opportunities for economic growth and urban development (Konstantaki and Wickens 2010).

According to Standeven and De Knop (1999, 12) sport tourism is considered as "all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for noncommercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and work locality". Ritchie (1984, 2) considers mega events as "major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination". Whereas, Ritchie (1984, 2) further defined hallmark events as "as a major one-time or recurring event of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term." Roche (2000) has identified types of events according to their target markets and types of Media interest (local, regional, international and global) (Table 2).

Table 2. Types of events (Roche 2000, 4)

Type of Event	Example of Event	Target Attendance/Market	Type of Media Interest
Mega Event	Expos Olympics World Cup soccer	Global	Global TV
Special Event	Grand Prix (F1) World Regional Sport (e.g. Pan-Am Games)	World Regional/National	National TV International TV
Hall Event	National Sport Event (e.g. Australian Games) Big City sport/festivals	National Regional	Local TV National
Community Event	Local community Event	Local	Local TV/Press Local Press



More specifically, some events have the appeal and power to attract global Media and target market such as World Cup, Olympics and Expo. For example, the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil had attracted more than 3.2 billion viewers and broadcasters showed some 98,087 hours of match footage from Brazil (FIFA 2015).

The interest in organizing or hosting events can be ascribed to the contribution that they make to significant initiatives such as place branding, tourism promotion, developing publicity, increasing occupancy rate, enhancing re-visitation, and overcoming seasonality effects (Getz 1997). Accordingly, locals' perceptions of social impacts resulting from hosting large scale sport tourism events have become critical factors for receiving community wide event support (Kim *et al.* 2015).

Commonly, the connections between sport and tourism have progressed both in their different industries and academic fields (Gammon and Robinson 2003). It is well accepted that organizing large-scale sport tourism events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup gather considerable attention on the global scale (Kim and Walker 2012). This view was supported by Kim and Petrick (2005) who argue that so far there has been an increased interest on assessing community residents' socio-psychological advantages of hosting large-scale tourism events. Elsewhere, Gibson *et al.* (2012) assert that organizing small scale sports events which are coherent with the residents' infrastructure and human and cultural capital may be a practical form of sustainable tourism development. Minnaert (2012) mentions that hosting sport event could enhance the community engagement, and increase the employment opportunities, well-being, and social inclusion and strengthen the collective identity.

In contrast to the previous argument, Csobán and Serra (2014) postulate that sporting events may have real negative impacts, which appear to increase with the nature and scale of the sport event. For example, mega sports events regularly need the development of new infrastructure and superstructure, which may cause a big burden on the residents after the event (Hiller 2006).

Ohmann *et al.* (2006) have investigated the perceived impacts of the 2006 FIFA World Cup on locals of Munich in Germany. Thus, they state that the impacts perceived were commonly positive with regards to urban generation, augmented sense of security, positive fan behavior and the broad atmosphere surrounding the event, and negative associated with increased crime, prostitution, and displacement of German residents. However, it is significant to aware the potential impacts of a tourism sporting event and its effects on the quality of life of local community (Fredline 2000).

Hitherto a considerable amount of literature has been published on the impacts of sport events on the host communities. The majority of these studies have mainly concentrated on assessing the economic rather than the social impacts (Twynam and Johnston 2004, Kim *et al.* 2006, Bull and Lovell 2007, Swart *et al.* 2008, Kim and Walker 2012). Social impact could be defined as "the changes of quality of life of residents of tourist destination" based on hosting tourism events (Mathieson and Wall 1982, 137).

Thus far, Fredline (2006) states that empirical research on the social dimensions of different sport events is very scant. Kim and Petrick (2005) explain that the cause for this lack of attention is that social and cultural impacts are less tangible than economic impacts and thus it is not easy task to measure them.

Generally, barriers to sports participation by females from different cultural backgrounds are generated by social structures (Arab-Moghaddam, Henderson and Sheikholeslami 2007). More specifically, there are still prejudices, and conflicting perceptions of females playing football (Hallmann 2012). Therefore, Women World Cup represents a great opportunity to enhance the awareness of women's soccer and strengthen its image (Hallmann 2012).

Recently, a considerable literature has grown up around the theme of FIFA World Cup and its impacts (Table 3). Most of these studies have investigated the impact of World Cup on the hosting destinations or communities. Beyond that, there is still no study that explores the impacts of Women World Cup. As a general note, the majorities of these studies on residents' perceptions have followed a quantitative approach.

However, Hendderson (2014) the phenomenon of hosting mega sport event is striking in Oil-rich Gulf states. Khodr (2012) has focused on hosting mega-events in Qatar to enhance its international tourism brand and develop the overall tourism products in the country. Likewise, Henderson (2014) sheds light on the challenges and opportunities of hosting the 2022 football World Cup in Qatar. In the same vein, Rechie (2015) confirms that Qatar has witness huge progress in its sport tourism and it employs sport tourism as a foreign policy tool to build relations with other countries and nations. Furthermore, Sutton (2016) indicates that several sport tourism events have been heavily developed and marketed in Dubai in the last years. Valek (2015) has explained Abu Dhabi sport tourism philosophy which has based on hosting elite sports such as Formula 1, golf, sailing, tennis, but without ignoring the local tradition and culture.

Table 3. Overview of major tourism studies on FIFA World Cups issues

Researcher/s	Date of Publication	Study focus	Study location	Methodology/Methods
Kim and Petrick	2005	Residents' perceptions on impacts of the FIFA2002 World Cup	Seoul/South Korea	Quantitative/ On site survey
Kim, Gursay and Lee	2006	The impact of the 2002 World Cup on South Korea	South Korea	Quantitative/ On site survey
Butler and Aicher	2015	Develop a comprehensive understanding of what the impact hosting the mega-event may have had on international perceptions of Brazil.	Brazil	A content analysis approach/collected articles from international media outlets and then analyzed the data
Malhado and Rothfuss	2013	surveying attitudes and travel behaviour of tourists and residents in the Brazilian city of Manaus, a host city for the 2014 FIFA World Cup	Manaus/Brazil	Quantitative/ On site survey
Lee and Taylor	2005	Measuring the economic impact of the case of 2002 FIFA World Cup	South Korea	Quantitative/ On site survey
Kim and Chalip	2004	Effects of fan motives, travel motivations, and the potential attendee's background on attending the FIFA World Cup	USA	Quantitative/ On site survey
Preuss	2013	The contribution of mega events, such as World Cup, onto the development of a green economy at the event host location and discusses how to measure it	-	A mixed method approach/ hermeneutics/ deductive analysis technique
Lohmann <i>et al.</i>	2015	Analysis of tourists' perception during 2014 World Cup	Brazil	Quantitative/ On site survey
Bob and Swart	2009	Resident perceptions of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup	South Africa	Quantitative/ On site survey
Brannagan and Rookwood	2016	Sports mega-events, soft power and soft disempowerment: international supporters' perspectives on Qatar's acquisition of the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals	Qatar	Qualitative/ field work and semi-structured interviews

Alsawafi (2017) has examined the most significant motivations behind Omani sport tourists to engage in sport events and determined the constrains for their sport tourism experiences. He further states that enjoy stadium atmosphere; support my team; spend my time without worrying about my study/ work; spend time with my friends and family; and escape were the most motivations for the Omani sport tourists. Whereas financial challenges and lack of time were the main travel constraints for them. Notwithstanding the significance of these studies in paving the way for establishing a sport tourism paradigm in the Arabic World, they pay scant attention to the issue of residents' perceptions on sport tourism impacts. Hence, this study aims to investigate the local residents' perceptions on impacts of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup organizing in Jordan in 2016. It also examines the difference between males and females in perceiving the positive and negative impacts of this event.

## 2. Methodology

In the current study the methodology is based on self-administered questionnaire involving two groups of questions. Thus, the first group consists of demographics variables (gender, age, education and income); whereas the second group includes the 31 items scale for residents' Perceptions on impacts of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup adapted from Kim and Petrick (2005). This scale, which was used to investigate residents' perceptions on impacts of the 2002 World Cup that was held in Korea and Japan. The rationale behind the deployment of this scale is that it encompasses the most frequents positive and negative impacts of hosting sport event as perceived by local residents in the literature, such as economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts. For the purpose of this



study, "Women empowerment" construct has been added to the questionnaire due to the fact that this event is essentially female tournament. The measures that were employed for each of the variables are as follows:

- Perceptions on positive impacts: (Tourism Resource Development and Urban Revitalization, Image Enhancement and Consolidation, Economic Benefits, Interest in Foreign Countries or Their Cultures, Tourism Infrastructure Development, and Women empowerment)
- Perceptions on negative impacts: (Negative Economic Perspective, Disorder and Conflicts, and Traffic Problem and Congestion)

Seven Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. Measures were translated from English into Arabic language. Using systematic/selection procedure, the data was collected at three main Stadiums in Jordan. Thus, self-administered questionnaires were presented to local residents who attended one or more matches of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Amman international Stadium, Prince Mohammed international Stadium in Zarqa and Al-Hassan international Stadium in Irbid, from September 30 to October 21, 2016 (During the event).

As a general procedure, it was determined to focus on the local residents at a point in time (during the event). Thus, the respondents of this study were spectators of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup. According to Knott, Fyall and Jones (2013), yet it seems that there is no consensus on best methodological approaches to explore sport tourism events studies, particularly the issue of timing for study conduct. Therefore, such studies could be undertaken as a pre-event, post event or at a single point in time. In this study, the justification for conducting the questionnaire during the event is to have the respondents fill in the questionnaire on the spot during the fever of the Women's World Cup in Jordan. Nonetheless, Waitt (2003) postulates that attitudes towards an event are possible to change across time since the formation of an exchange relationship between the person and the event is not stable. Similarly, Kim and Petrick (2005) conclude that residents' perceptions of the impacts of mega-events might vary with passage of time.

The questionnaire was administered only to those who attended the event matches and wanted to participate in this study. The researcher has paid attention to the privacy and personal needs of the respondents and participants in the research. Of the 500 distributed questionnaires, a total of 348 respondents returned the self-administered questionnaires. The missing values were managed by a list-wise procedure. Quantitative analysis was performed by using SPSS 21.0 (statistical package for social sciences) for Windows. A pre-test study has been conducted to improve the questionnaire and investigate the reliability of all its scales. It was administered to 70 respondents from the host community in Amman. The outcome of this pilot study contributed to the final development of the questionnaire. The current study employed different types of statistical techniques as appropriate. Non-parametric methods were investigated to analyze the data, such as: frequencies and percentages, reliability analysis, and mean score; and parametric method, such as, an independent sample t-Test.

The main limitation to this study was the sample size consisting of 348 respondents due to the fact that many residents refused to complete the questionnaire. Another limitation in this study was the reliance on self-reported data. For one thing, self-reported data is prone to memory failure of the respondents. Moreover, there may be a skewing of the respondents' responses so as to demonstrate their behaviour in a favourable manner. Thus, the respondents' distortions and bias can influence the validity of the study (Crockett, Schulenberg, and Petersen 1987). Likewise, this study was limited by the absence of previous studies on impacts of sport tourism on the host communities in the Arab World, particularly female sport events.

### 3. Results

Table 4 provides an overview of the demographics for the study respondents. Thus, it shows that the rate of males (57.6%) is higher than that of females (42.4%). The largest age bracket is 35-39 years of age with (56.8%). The 18-34 years olds represented the second largest bracket (25.8%) of respondents. whereas the smallest age group was 60 and above with just (1.2%). Over (41.1%) of the respondents were graduates of university, whilst only (2.3%) have a primary education. Regarding the income, most of the respondents (52.8%) have household incomes of JOD 3001- 6000 (US\$ 4232 - 8463), whereas respondents with high income represented only (4.9%).

Table 5 shows the results of the Jordanian residents' perceptions on the positive impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan. Thus, the mean scores of the residents' perception ranged from the lowest mean score 4.37 to the highest 5.70. The standard deviations for the items measuring the residents' perceptions ranged between .840 and 2.09. The Cronbach's Alpha for the items of the residents' perceptions scale was high 0.870.

Table 4. Demographics of the study respondents

Demographic Items	Value	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	57.6
	Female	42.4
Age	18-34	25.8
	35-39	56.8
	40-49	13.6
	50-59	2.6
	+60	1.2
Education	Primary	2.3
	Secondary/ high school	15.2
	Diploma	33.0
	Undergraduate	41.1
	Post-graduate	8.1
Annual Income	Below 3000	20.9
	3001-6000	52.8
	6001-9000	15.7
	9001-1000	5.8
	Above 10000	4.9

Overall, the main factors of residents' perceptions on positive impacts were "Tourism resource development and urban revitalization" (M= 4.88, SD= .826), "Interest in foreign countries or their cultures" (M= 4.87, SD= .840) "Women empowerment" (M= 4.86, SD= .927), and "Image Enhancement and Consolidation" (M= 4.78, SD= .870).

Table 5. Residents' perceptions on the positive impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Measures	Mean	SD	N =348
<b>Tourism Resource Development and Urban Revitalization</b>	4.88	.826	342
Enhanced city beauty	5.70	1.81	348
Enhanced the efforts of preserving heritage tourism resources	4.74	1.16	348
Increased shopping facilities	4.62	1.45	345
Increased leisure facilities	4.80	1.24	346
Increased number of cultural events	4.53	1.41	347
<b>Image Enhancement and Consolidation</b>	4.78	.870	339
Increased opportunity to inform Amman to the world	5.30	1.48	347
Enhanced recognition of Amman internationally	4.80	1.19	345
Improved image of Amman internationally	4.82	1.19	347
Enhanced pride of Amman residents due to being hosts	4.62	1.32	347
Reinforced community spirit	4.37	1.84	345
<b>Economic Benefits</b>	4.74	.990	340
Increased job opportunities	4.44	1.87	347
Improved the economic conditions	4.89	1.37	348
Accelerated the growth of Amman	4.76	1.19	344
Increased investment in Amman	4.52	1.49	345
<b>Interest in Foreign Countries or their Cultures</b>	4.87	.840	335
Increased interest in foreign cultures	4.90	1.34	348
Increased interest in foreign languages	4.94	1.19	338
Increased interest in international events	4.75	1.23	345
<b>Tourism Infrastructure Development</b>	4.67	.930	343
Increased number of hotel rooms	5.04	1.57	348
Accelerated development of tourism infrastructure	4.85	1.18	346
Improved conditions of city road system	4.71	1.37	345
<b>Women empowerment</b>	4.86	.927	334
Improving the image of women in the society	4.95	2.09	347
Enhancing women's empowerment the society	4.86	1.15	339
Encourage women's participation in sports activities	4.83	1.30	348
Developing women's sports	4.75	1.25	344

In terms of individual items measuring residents' perceptions, the item, "Enhanced city beauty" (Tourism resource development and urban revitalization) scored highest ( $M= 5.70$ ,  $SD= 1.81$ ); whilst, the item 'Reinforced community spirit' (Image enhancement and consolidation) had the lowest mean score ( $M= 4.37$ ,  $SD= 1.48$ ).

The results in Table 6 depict a sample of Jordanian residents' perceptions on the negative impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan. The mean score of the seven items ranged from 4.27 to 5.76. The standard deviations for the items ranged from 1.02 to 1.75. The internal consistencies for the items measuring residents' perception on negative impacts the items were .710. The main perceptions factors behind the cohort in Jordan were negative economic perspective ( $M= 4.80$ ,  $SD= .950$ ), Traffic Problem and Congestion ( $M= 4.77$ ,  $SD= 1.02$ ) and disorder and conflicts ( $M= 4.53$ ,  $SD= 1.47$ ). The questionnaire item, "Increased price of real estate" had the highest mean score for the items measuring negative perceptions ( $M= 5.76$ ,  $SD= 1.75$ ), whereas the item, "Brought disturbance or disorder by foreign tourists" scored the lowest mean ( $M= 4.50$ ,  $SD= 1.48$ ).

Table 6. Residents' perceptions on the negative impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Measures	Mean	SD	N=348
<b>Negative Economic Perspective</b>	4.80	.950	345
Increased price of real estate	5.76	1.75	348
Increased product prices	4.75	1.22	345
Excessive spending for preparation of the World Cup <sup>2</sup>	4.91	1.33	348
<b>Disorder and Conflicts</b>	4.53	1.47	244
Brought disturbance or disorder by foreign tourists	4.50	1.48	345
Brought conflicts and antagonism between foreign tourists and residents	4.56	1.47	346
<b>Traffic Problem and Congestion</b>	4.77	1.02	345
Increased traffic problem	4.76	1.20	346
Brought congestion in inner city of	4.78	1.45	347

An independent sample t test was performed to compare the mean consistency scores of the perceptions of positive impacts of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup between males and females Jordanian residents. The analysis revealed a significant difference did occur for 'image enhancement and consolidation' between males ( $M= 24.27$ ,  $SD=4.14$ ) and females ( $M= 24.22$ ,  $SD= 4.31$ ),  $t(34) = 2.69$ ,  $p = .007$ . Moreover, there was a significant difference between males ( $M= 18.84$ ,  $SD= 3.80$ ) and females ( $M= 18.42$ ,  $SD= 4.16$ ) in 'economic benefits'  $t(97)=3.37$ ,  $p=.048$ . But there were no significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the males and females in terms of 'interest in foreign countries or their cultures', 'tourism infrastructure development', and 'women empowerment'.

Table 7. T-test results for comparison of residents' perceptions on the positive impact by gender group

Positive impact factors	Gender				P-Value
	Male		Female		
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Tourism Resource Development and Urban Revitalization	24.49	4.35	24.37	3.84	.790
2. Image Enhancement and Consolidation	24.47	4.14	24.22	4.31	.007
3. Economic Benefits	18.84	3.80	18.42	4.16	.048
4. Interest in Foreign Countries or Their Cultures	14.83	2.56	14.39	2.45	.406
5. Tourism Infrastructure Development	14.69	2.77	14.49	2.81	.891
6. Women empowerment	19.73	3.79	19.31	3.59	.266

As shown in table 8, an independent sample t-Test indicated that there were some differences between males ( $M= 14.53$ ,  $SD= 3.05$ ) and females ( $M=14.29$ ,  $SD=2.57$ ) in terms of their perceptions on 'negative Economic Perspective'  $t(72) = 3.42$ ,  $p=.036$ . Also, there was a significant difference between males ( $M= 17.69$ ,  $SD= 5.62$ ) and females ( $M=17.91$ ,  $SD=4.75$ ) with regards to 'Traffic Problem and Congestion'  $t(34)= 1.37$ ,  $p=.009$ . However, they have the same viewpoints about disorder and conflicts  $p= .256$ . Collectively, local male respondents indicated that they more highly perceived both positive and negative impacts of this Women's World Cup in Jordan than local female respondents did.

Table 8. T-test results for comparison of residents' perceptions on the negative impact by gender group

Negative impact factors	Gender				P-Value
	Male		Female		
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Negative EconomicPerspective	14.53	3.05	14.29	2.57	.036
2. Disorder and Conflicts	17.96	5.62	17.91	4.75	.256
3. Traffic Problem and Congestion	9.74	1.99	9.43	2.08	.009

#### 4. Discussion

However, hosting international female sport event in the Arabic area is new and unusual phenomenon. In the light of the above discussion, it is interesting to assess the perceptions of local community in Jordan toward the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup which is considered the most important sport tourism event in the history of Jordan.

The descriptive results revealed that most of the local residents attending the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup were males. It can be deduced that sport tourists in the context of Women's Soccer are commonly dominated by males, particularly in male-dominated societies. This female underrepresentation in Women's Soccer spectatorship is confirmed by several studies such as (Parrish and Nauright 2014, Chikafa 2014). FIFA (2016) indicates that women confronted a struggle to watch football in the stands and play the game in the Middle East not that long ago. Whereas this Women's World cup in Jordan has paved the way for more opportunities for Jordanian and Middle Eastern women to participate or watch such game. Moreover, the Laws of the Game were amended to allow the wearing of headscarves and the U-17 Women's World Cup 2016 was the first-ever fixture in a FIFA event to feature players sporting head coverings.

In terms of age, the current study indicated that the majority of local residents in this event were young and middle aged. This result corroborates the idea of Funk, *et al.* (2001), who suggested that the participants attending the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup had an average age of 34 years. In this study, most present respondents were well educated and they had mostly undergraduate education. In terms of the annual income, it seems that the most frequent income average in the chosen sample is mostly JOD 3001- 6000 (US\$ 4232 - 8463). These results are in agreement with the average income in Jordan of about \$ 4600 accounted in 2015 by Department of Statistics in Jordan (Department of Statistics 2017).

Finding of this study showed that the major perceptions of positive impacts of 'FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup were:

- tourism resource development and urban revitalization;
- interest in foreign countries or their cultures; and
- Women empowerment.

This study produced results, which accord with the findings of previous studies in this field, which have suggested that hosting international sport events could be a significant part of local residents' urbanization through development of venues and local transport systems (Kim and Petrick 2005, Kim *et al.* 2006, Kim and Walker 2012). Furthermore, the findings of this study corroborate the thoughts of Deccio and Baloglu (2002) who suggested that such sport events can enhance the host culture nationally and internationally and awareness of the host area and therefore develop quality of local community's life. In the context of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan, the CEO of the Jordan 2016 Local Organizing Committee (LOC) states that "It was essential that we built the necessary infrastructure, including the stadiums and 14 training pitches, in order to be up to international standards. We have also trained a large number of people, equipping them for the highest level. These efforts will, without a shadow of a doubt, contribute towards the development of Jordanian football, while also benefiting the wider community" (FIFA 2016). Another positive impact of this event was providing many employment opportunities for Jordanian women in planning, organization and daily operations of the tournament. Thus, no less than 75 per cent of the (LOC) members were women (FIFA 2016).

Prior studies have noted that local communities' perceptions on negative social impacts have earned more attention from sport tourism, in particular and tourism studies, in general (Kim and Petrick 2005). However, this study indicated that the main perceptions factors on negative impacts were:

- negative economic perspective;
- traffic Problem and Congestion; and
- disorder and conflicts.

However, it seems possible that these results are due to the fact that hosting of sport events may induce increases in the price of goods, services and property and causing economic and social burdens on local community (Deccio and Baloglu 2002). Another possible explanation for such results might be that traffic problems and

congestion may happen during the construction of facilities to host international tourism events or during the event itself, acutely affecting the daily life of local people (Mihalik and Cummings 1995, Fredline 2004; Collins *et al.* 2007).

The T-test results indicate that there were significant differences between residents with regards to “image enhancement” and “economic benefits” based on their gender but not in case of “interest in foreign countries”, “tourism infrastructure development”, and “women empowerment”. Regarding perceptions on negative impact of the event, the analysis failed to reveal a significant difference between the two groups (males and females) relating to ‘negative economic perspective’ and ‘traffic problem and congestion’. Whereas there was a significant difference between males and females with regards to ‘disorder and conflicts’. In average, males rated all positive and negative impact factors higher than females. This outcome is contrary to that of Kim and Petrick (2005) who found that females rated the positive impacts for the event higher than males. Furthermore, this differs from Hallmann (2012) who conclude that women have a more Positive image of the World Cup than men.

It seems that the residents’ perceptions are relatively dependent upon gender differences. Ohmann *et al.* (2006) argue that perceptions are not relying on socio-demographic factors such as age, gender or length of stay in the case of hosting FIFA World Cup in Germany in 2006. However, it is worth noted that gender studies in the setting of tourism in the Arabic countries are negligence and uncommon.

## Conclusion

As stated in the literature review, to date, assessing the perceptions of local residents on impacts of international sport in the Arab countries has received scant attention in the research literature. Therefore, the present research explores, for the first time, the perceptions of local Jordanian on the positive and negative impacts on FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup in Jordan 2016. The findings of the study indicated that tourism resource development and urban revitalization was the most important perception of residents on the positive impacts and negative economic perspective was the main perception on the negative impacts of the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup. This study contributes to existing knowledge on perceptions of sport tourism by providing an insight in perceptions of host community on international female sport event. Additionally, the findings add to our understanding of the perceptions of local residents toward the positive and negative impacts of international Women’s World Cup. Thus, this research has made a beginning toward filling this gap and provides additional evidence about the perceptions of local community on negative and positive impacts of such event. Nonetheless, perceiving positive impacts on sport events is vital and critical for tourism managers and planners to ensure the support of local community to host such events. Therefore, it has commonly been assumed that if local residents have satisfaction with the perceived positive impacts from events, they will show positive perceptions and supportive behavioral intentions toward future events (Kim and Patrick 2005). Moreover, the success of an event is usually shaped by the enthusiasm of the local community (Gursoy, Kim and Uysal 2004). Additionally, Understanding the different event impacts and the residents’ attitudes towards these impacts can help to create actions that could provide opportunity to make a balance between social and economic development and reduce the unwanted impacts on local community (Delamere 2001).

Several recommendations can be done for future research in this tourism knowledge area. A further study could assess the potential relationships between perceptions and other variables such as motivations and behavioural intention to support mega-sport events. More research is required to compare residents’ perceptions according to their geographic location. Further research might explore the perceptions of tourism stockholders on sport event impacts and their support to hosting such events. Another possible area of future research would be to study the tourism management practices in terms of planning and managing the impacts of sport events on local residents.

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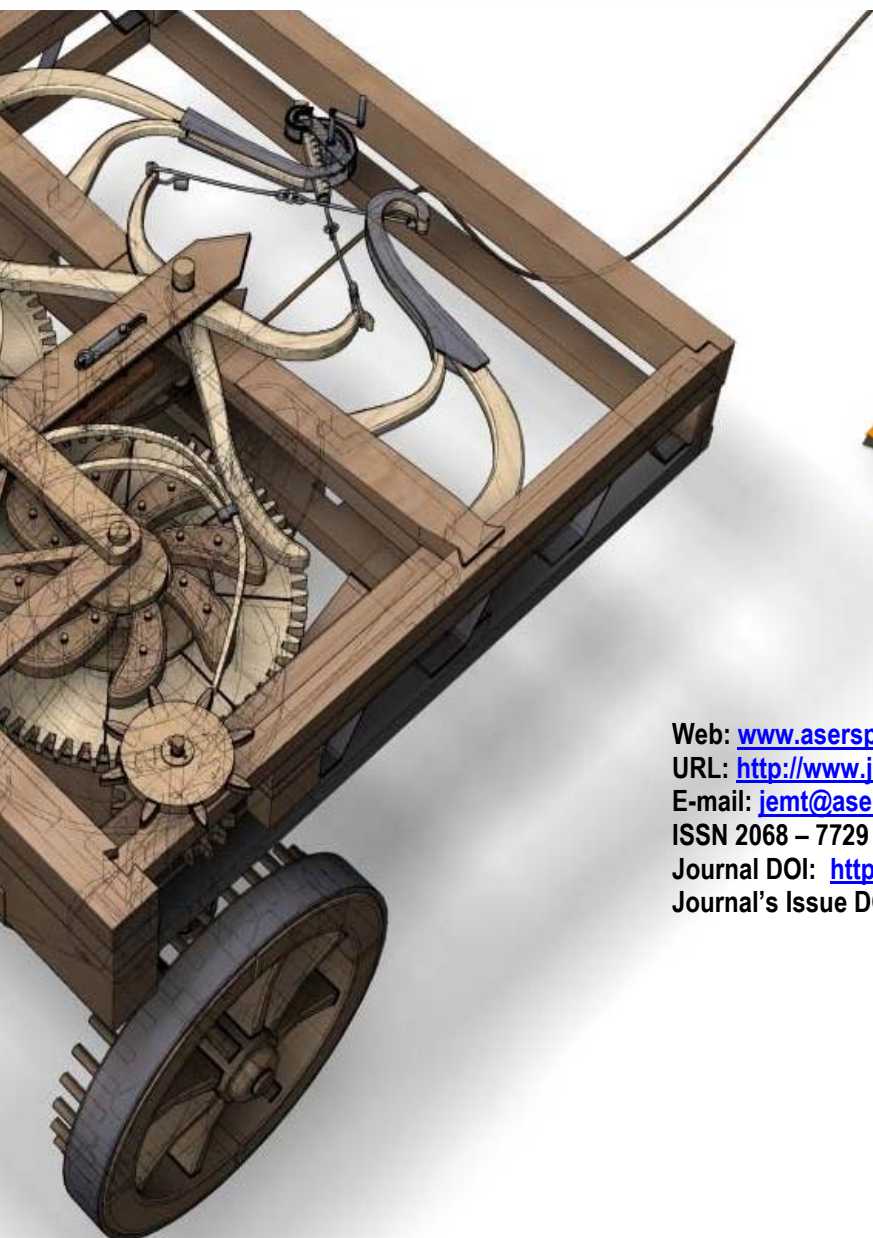


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